

It's **NATIONAL AAPI HERITAGE MONTH**

cooking up **CULTURE**

Five first-generation Asian and Pacific Islander Americans drew inspiration from the meals they grew up with—and used it to forge their own foodie paths.

by Samantha MacAvoy

Tofu Tikka
recipe, page 84

spice it up!
For this vegan version of the Indian-restaurant staple, Sheil seasons tofu generously. This protein is mild and can handle a robust spice blend like garam masala.



66 After spending several summers in India, I learned that cooking with what's in season makes for truly delicious food." —Sheil

Garam Masala and Papad Salad
recipe, page 84



COURTESY OF SHEIL SHUKLA, PLANT-BASED INDIA.

sheil shukla

CHICAGO

Plant-based cooking was easy for Sheil to master—he had grown up eating mostly vegetarian Gujarati food made by his grandmother. Spiced vegetables, dal, and rice were staples at his family's table. He didn't learn to cook until he was in college, where the lackluster dining options led him to making his own dinners, trying out dishes from across different regions of India. After watching food-conscious documentaries, Sheil became vegan and shared his produce-packed recipes online and then in his cookbook, *Plant-Based India*. Now a doctor, a husband, and father to a 1-year-old, he splits cooking duties with his wife, who also embraces nutritious vegan foods. They see this diet as not limiting but inspiring: Adjust recipes as needed, Sheil says, and above all, have fun with it.

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Smoky Tofu-Nori Wontons

recipe, page 85

andrea nguyen

SANTA CRUZ, CA

Ever-Green Vietnamese isn't Andrea's first cookbook—or her second, or her third. The writer, editor, and author of the newsletter Pass the Fish Sauce (housed on Substack) has been educating people about Vietnamese cuisine since 2006. After fleeing Saigon in 1975 and resettling in Southern California, then 6-year-old Andrea and her family became friendly with neighbors, learning what it meant to be American. In turn, Andrea's family shared their

culture—often along with dozens of crispy dumplings—and she has since taken that spirit to a much broader audience through her writing. Her latest cookbook offers a plant-heavy, low-meat approach to Vietnamese cuisine that's meant to inspire a more nutritious, environmentally friendly plate. Andrea seeks to remind readers that Vietnamese food—full of spices, aromatics, and of course vegetables—not only fits into a healthier diet but also helps create a healthier planet for us all.



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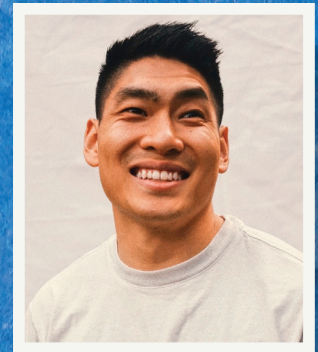
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66 If I can inspire home cooks to make Vietnamese food—and make it their own—then I will have achieved my goal. —Andrea

frankie gaw

SEATTLE

Frankie's nickname as a kid was a Chinese phrase meaning "Little Fat Boy," a term of endearment that highlighted the young eater's appetite. In his 20s, Frankie started cooking, and when his father passed away after a battle with lung cancer, Frankie was compelled to better understand where he had come from. He turned to food as a method of discovery, visiting his grandmother every few months to learn her decades-old recipes. While his appreciation for the Taiwanese cuisine of his heritage deepened, he couldn't ignore the influence of his Ohio upbringing. From scallion mac 'n' cheese to congee inspired by Olive Garden, Frankie's food celebrates his experience as a Taiwanese American navigating two cultural backgrounds—and eating them both up.



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Taiwanese twist Frankie replaces all-purpose flour with Mochiko sweet rice flour, which gives this snacking bread a deliciously chewy bite.



Banana Walnut Mochi Bread

recipe, page 83

66 It's OK to push your boundaries and play with your food, because ultimately cooking is a way to express yourself. —Frankie

joanne chang

BOSTON

Joanne ate with her family every night as she was growing up. When they weren't enjoying dinner, they were planning, prepping, or shopping for it. So when the consultant-turned-chef reached a fork in her career, she decided to try working in a professional kitchen for a year. Twenty years later, she's co-owner (with her husband, Christopher) of the beloved Flour Bakery, famous for its sticky buns, as well as the restaurant Myers + Chang, which serves food inspired by her Taiwanese background and other Asian cuisines. Joanne and Christopher wanted the restaurant to be a place for every occasion, from a casual weeknight dinner to a festive birthday celebration. Their goal is to make people feel comfortable and welcome—like a family dinner every night of the week.



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“We wanted Myers + Chang to have amazing food but also be the friendliest place in town.”

—Joanne



Taiwanese Dan Dan Noodle Salad

recipe, page 87

COURTESY OF KRISTIN TEIG, MYERS + CHANG AT HOME.



Lychee Madeleines with Hibiscus Tea Glaze & Dried Rose Petals

recipe, page 86

madeleine must-have

Cold batter is key to achieving the signature “hump” on the back of each cookie, which forms because of the temperature shock when the batter hits the hot oven.

“Baking has allowed me to share and connect with others on a scale I’d never thought possible.”

—Abi

abi balingit

BROOKLYN, NY

When Abi moved across the country from her family, she started infusing her baked goods with reminders of home. While she favored American-style sweets as a kid, her feelings of nostalgia led her to crave the Filipino flavors she had grown up with. Ube, coconut, tropical fruits, and more started showing up in Abi's sweets, which she began posting on a blog called *The Dusky Kitchen*—the name refers to the cooking space she shares with

two roommates, with light coming only through a small window. It may not be perfect, but the joy Abi gets from sharing her creations (she has also sold her desserts) overrides any fear of failure. Not that she has anything to be afraid of—the baker-by-night just released a cookbook, *Mayumu* (the Kapampangan word for “sweet”), that’s full of playful color-soaked desserts. She encourages readers, whether their kitchens are big or small, to adapt her recipes using ingredients available to them.



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COURTESY OF NICO SCHINCO, MAYUMU